



## WILLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the **Annual Meeting of Willand Parish Council** held on **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.00 pm, in the Club Room at Willand Village Hall, Gables Rd, Willand.**

**Present:** Cllr Sycamore, Cllr Scott, Cllr Little, Cllr Grantham, Cllr James, Cllr Phare, Cllr Hutter, Cllr Jones, Cllr Turner, Cllr Fernbank

**In Attendance:** D Bird, Parish Clerk  
County Councillor Simon Clist

### Minutes

**1405/00** In the absence of Cllr Warren due to ill health the meeting was opened by Cllr Phare as the current Vice-Chair. A short statement from Cllr Warren was read out. A card will be sent to Cllr Warren on behalf of the Parish Council passing on their good wishes.

**1405/01** Cllr Phare invited nominations for the role of Chair of the Parish Council. Cllr Warren was nominated by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Phare. Cllr Warren was unanimously elected. In his absence it was **resolved** that he sign the declaration of office at a later date, Cllr Jones proposed, Cllr Hutter seconded, unanimously agreed.

**1405/02** Cllr Phare invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Cllr Sycamore was nominated by the Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Hutter. Cllr Sycamore accepted the nomination and was unanimously elected. In the absence of the Chair Cllr Sycamore took over as Chair of the meeting. The Council thanked Cllr Phare for 15 years of service to date with 14 years of those as Vice-Chair.

**1405/03** It was **resolved** to co-opt Paul Michael Fernbank, known as Toby Fernbank, as a Councillor to fill a vacancy on the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Scott, seconded by Cllr Little, 7 voted in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention. Acceptance form and electronic communication form both signed and Register of Interest form provided for completion and return to Mid Devon District Council.

**1405/04** **Apologies**  
It was **noted** that apologies had been received from Cllr Warren.

**1405/05** **Declarations of Interest**  
Declarations taken in the relevant item.

- 1405/06 Public Question Time**  
There were no members of the public present.
- 1405/07 Order of Business**  
There were no changes to the order of business.
- 1405/08** It was **resolved** to approve and sign the minutes of the Willand Parish Council Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026, proposed by Cllr Hutter, seconded by Cllr Turner. Unanimously agreed.
- 1405/09 Chair and Clerk's Announcements**
- Sam Fincher, the magazine editor passed away on the 27<sup>th</sup> April. Sam was very involved in the village and the Clerk has delivered a condolence card to the family on behalf of the Parish Council.
  - There is an agenda item, 24, to reconsider the Coronation bench location and also an invoice in item 20b for the Handyman for purchase of the concreting materials which will be used when finally installed, plus an additional £200 to cover the time allocated but cancelled at the last minute due to the resident's objection.
  - Some copies of the last edition of the magazine were missing the first and last 4 pages. It is not known how many copies were affected but 3 cases have been reported. The printers issued an invoice for the full amount but have also now issued a credit note of £152.40 (15%) which will be taken off the payment to be made, the net payment is on list A in item 20b.
  - A request has been received from Western Commodities to hold a picnic/BBQ for their employees in Jubilee Field on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July. It is a public open space that can be used by anyone and must always remain open to the public. The Clerk has advised them of this and sent through the general conditions of use for the field. She has also advised them that they cannot park or use the facilities at the village hall without express permission from them. The company have provided copies of their public liability and employers liability insurances, which will cover the event. The Clerk will investigate the issue of BBQs as concerns were raised by Councillors.
  - Concerns raised re road safety outside Steamers have been passed onto the Halberton Parish Clerk.
  - Mid Devon Cabinet has approved an Asset Transfer Policy with a preferred option to lease assets rather than transfer the freehold. The Parish Council already leases the Gables Lea side of Jubilee Field and Orchard Way. The deadline for expressions of interest is the 30<sup>th</sup> June and an item will be brought to the 11<sup>th</sup> June meeting for Councillors to decide whether to pursue the full ownership option.
- 1405/10 County and District Councillor Reports.**
- The County Councillor was in attendance. He advised that there was an underspend in the County Council budget for 2025-26. On the back of that £5m is being put into a Highways rapid road response squad to attend to emergency pothole issues. The Highways Capital programme is now moving forward as the majority of the wet winter potholes have been repaired. Local Government Review

– expecting a decision in mid-July, the County Council is making preparations in readiness for the announcement so it can move forward with the work that will be required. Cllr Clist chaired the Heart of the South West Trading Standards Committee – trading standards are receiving a large number of complaints from the public about premises and traders.

- No District Councillors present. A written report was received from District Councillor Connor in advance and circulated prior to the meeting. Apologies received from District Councillors Poynton & Glover.

**1405/11** It was **resolved** to approve and adopt the:

- a) Code of Conduct
- b) Standing Orders
- c) Financial Regulations.

Moved by the Chair, unanimously agreed

**1405/12** It was **resolved** to approve the Committee and Working Group Terms of Reference and the individual Working Groups Terms of Reference as presented. It was **resolved** to agree the Committee and Working Group membership as follows:

- Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group – Cllrs Little, Scott, James, Hutter, Jones and Sycamore.
- Cemetery Working Group – Cllrs Grantham, Sycamore and Phare.
- Open Space & Recreation Group – Cllrs Warren, Hutter, Grantham and Scott.
- Biodiversity Working Group – Cllrs Jones, Hutter, Fernback and Turner.
- Joint Traffic Working Group Willand representatives – Cllrs Grantham and Turner.
- Devon Green Power Community Fund Parish Council representatives – Cllrs Hutter and Turner.

All moved by the Chair. Unanimously agreed

**1405/13** it was **noted** that the following Willand United Charities Trustees had been appointed by the Parish Council on the 10 November 2022 for a term of 4 years: Kate Taylor, Cllr Stephen Little, Cllr Neil James and Cllr Jason Scott. The fifth Trustee being Ex-officio (the Rector). Cllr Little clarified that if a trustee leaves mid-term their successor is appointed for a term of 4 years at that point.

**1405/14** Cllr Grantham confirmed that he was happy to continue as the Village Hall Committee Representative, and was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Hutter, unanimously agreed.

**1405/15** It was **resolved** to approve the Asset Register Policy and the inventory of land and other assets as at the end of the Financial Year – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Moved by the Chair. Unanimously agreed.

**1405/16** An insurance schedule from the current insurer, Clear Councils, was provided in advance of the meeting, which included full cover for loss or damage of play and trim trail/gym equipment as agreed at the budget meeting in December 2025. The Clerk also asked Zurich and Gallagher to quote finally receiving a belated quote from Zurich

the morning of the meeting which is significantly more expensive, and nothing received from Gallagher - it is assumed that they have been unable to provide a competitive quote. Emails have been saved to the file for audit purposes. It was **resolved** to insure with Clear Councils as at an annual cost of £1,483.11 and enter into a 3-year Fixed Rate Agreement as this reduces the annual premium. Proposed by Cllr James seconded by Cllr Phare. Unanimously agreed.

**1405/17** It was **resolved** to approve the following policies as reviewed, with no changes:

- Press & Media Policy
- Social Media Policy
- General Data Protection Regulations Policy
- IT Policy

All Moved by the Chair. Unanimously agreed

**1405/18** Employment Policies:

- Health and Safety Policy – Cllr Turner, in his professional capacity, felt that some additions are required to this policy. It was **resolved** that Cllr Turner work with the Clerk to make the necessary amendments and bring a revised policy back to Council. Cllr Turner proposed, Cllr Scott seconded, unanimously agreed.
- Sickness Policy, no changes
- Grievance Policy, no changes
- Equality and Diversity Policy, no changes
- Disciplinary & Capability Policy, no changes

It was **resolved** to approve those policy above where no changes are required.  
Moved by the Chair. Unanimously agreed

**1405/19** **Meetings of Council.**

- a) It was **resolved** that Full Council Meetings would be held on the second Thursday of each month at 7pm at Willand Village Hall, excluding August.
- b) It was **resolved** that a Budget Meeting be held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2026 at 7 p.m.
- c) It was **resolved** that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council would be held within 14 days of the May 2027 local elections. It is anticipated that elections will be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May – the first Thursday in May.

Moved by the Chair. Unanimously Agreed

**1405/20** **Accounts Due for Payment and Receipts to include:**

- a) It was **resolved** to note the Summary of Receipts and Payments and approve the Bank Reconciliation up to the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Cllr Phare proposed, Cllr James seconded. Unanimously agreed.
- b) It was **resolved** to authorise the payment of invoices as set out in List A of the payments report, and to **ratify the** additional payments made since the previous meeting as set out in List B. Cllr Hutter proposed, Cllr Phare seconded. Unanimously agreed.
- c) The Reserves Balances Report up to the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026 was **noted**.

- d) It was **resolved** to approve the list of regular payments for 2026-27, which was then signed by the Chair. Moved by the Chair, unanimously agreed.
- e) The Council's expenditure under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the financial year 2025-2026 was **noted**.
- f) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR):
  - i. The internal Auditors Report was **noted**.
  - ii. It was **resolved** to agree the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26, which was then signed by the Chair and the Clerk. Proposed by Cllr Phare and seconded by Cllr James. Unanimously agreed.
  - iii. It was **resolved** to approve the Accounting Statements for 2025-26, signed by the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer prior to the meeting and signed by the Chair at the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Hutter and seconded by Cllr James. Unanimously agreed.
- g) It was **noted** that the AGAR will now be submitted to the External Auditor and the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June to the 14<sup>th</sup> of July inclusive.

**1405/21** There was no further update from the Neighbourhood Planning Implementation Advisory Group for this meeting.

**1405/22** The future of the magazine was considered. It was **resolved** that Cllr Jones will post on social media raising the possibility that the magazine will cease production if no-one comes forward as editor. The Parish Council wished to thank those who have helped produce the most recent issues in the absence of an editor. Moved by the Chair, unanimously agreed.

**1405/23** It was **resolved** to approve the increase in the Handyman's hourly rate by 5% to £31.50 per hour. Cllr Hutter proposed, Cllr Jones seconded, unanimously agreed.

**1405/24** The proposed siting of the Coronation Bench in Jaycroft, opposite the allotments on Mid Devon land, was reviewed following a complaint from a local resident. The resident has now said she has no objection the bench being there. It was therefore **resolved** to site the bench as originally agreed. Cllr Little proposed, Cllr Scott seconded, unanimously agreed.

**1405/25** Cllr Jones gave an update on the village planters and it was **resolved** to trim back some of the larger bushes later in the year. It was **resolved** to send the volunteers an email offering plants available from a member of the public and it was further **resolved** to purchase additional plants as required. Cllr Jones proposed, Cllr Hutter seconded, unanimously agreed.

**1405/26** **Mid Devon District Council – Planning Applications [MDDC Planning Public Access Portal](#)**  
 Mid Devon District Council, the determining Authority, has asked for comments from this Parish Council on the following planning applications:

a) Reference: 25/01638/MOUT

Proposal: Outline with all matters except access reserved for the erection of up to 170 dwellings, pedestrian and cycle facilities, associated open space and SUD's drainage

Location: Land at NGR 303878 111905 West of The B3181 Uffculme Devon

It was **resolved** to comment as follows: "The Parish Council reiterates its objection to this development for the reasons outlined in its response dated the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025, as the concerns raised therein remain valid. The agent's contention that this site is in a sustainable location is strongly disputed for the reasons stated in the original response". Proposed by Cllr Hutter, seconded by Cllr Scott. Unanimously agreed.

The Clerk also advised that as from this week if the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is minded to refuse an application for 150 dwellings or more they have to consult with the Secretary of State who will then decide whether to call it in and determine at ministerial level. This will make it difficult for LPAs to refuse applications of this size without strong grounds.

It was **resolved** to ratify the following planning application submissions made since the last Full Council meeting. Moved by the Chair. Unanimously agreed.

- i. No observations on application number 26/00159/MFUL, Construction of an earth-banked slurry lagoon, two silage clamps with associated retaining wall, yard extension, fencing and drainage, Land at NGR 298043 107664 (Honey Park Farm) Butterleigh Devon, Cullompton (Neighbouring Parish consultation).
- ii. No objection subject to the work being carried out at the appropriate time of year to avoid disturbing nesting birds and other wildlife, on application number 26/00537/CAT- Notification of intention to reduce the height of a mixed species boundary hedge by 4-5m within the Conservation Area, Land at NGR 303550 110360 Rows Orchard Willand Devon.
- iii. Application number 26/00538/FULL, Erection of a 7.9m high lighting column with 4 150 watt LED floodlights, Land at NGR 303654 111158 Former Durban Works South View Road Willand Devon EX15 2RU, comments made - Willand Parish Council has no objection to this application subject to consideration of the impact on neighbouring residential properties.
- iv. No observations on application number 26/00580/MFUL, Variation of Condition 17 of planning permission 22/02374/MFUL (Construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm together with associated works, equipment and infrastructure) to allow the development to commence prior to the provision of off-site highway passing places, with the works to be completed within 12 months of the development first being operational, Land at NGR 301974 110937 Dean Hill Road Willand Devon. Note - this applies to the access to Two Trees Solar Farm via Brown's Bridge Lane in Halberton Parish off the road between Willand and Halberton.

**1405/26**

**Mid Devon District Council – Planning Decisions**

It was **noted** that Mid Devon District Council, the determining Authority, has made the following planning decisions.

Reference: 26/00053/FULL

Proposal: Change of use from coffee roastery (Use Class B2) to a mixed use comprising coffee roastery (B2) and takeaway outlet (E(b)), resulting in an overall Sui Generis use; to include the removal of three existing front elevation windows; installation of a takeaway hatch/counter in place of the central window; installation of two replacement frosted-glass windows to either and installation of an external roller shutter over the hatch for security

Location: Roastworks Coffee Co. Unit 7 Blackdown Park South View Estate

DECISION: Permission Granted

Reference: 26/00157/LBC

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for the replacement of 2 external doors/frames

Location: Redgates Cottage Old Jaycroft Willand

DECISION: Listed Building Consent Granted

Reference: 26/00224/TPO

Proposal: Application to shorten one branch growing towards property by approx. 2m back to suitable growth point and overall canopy reduction by approx. 1m-1.5m from one Ash tree (T1) protected by Tree Preservation Order 97/00008/TPO

Location: Barnwell Jaycroft Willand

DECISION: Consent Refused

Reference: 26/00272/CLP

Proposal: Certificate of lawfulness for the proposed rendering of the external brickwork

Location: 11 Elmside Willand Cullompton

DECISION: Certificate of lawful Use Refused

**1405/27**

**Councillor Reports:**

- Cllr Little raised the issue of Parish boundaries and asked that this be brought to a future meeting.
- Cllr Hutter advised that the first meeting had taken place of the Acorn Bioenergy Community Fund group. Further information on the application process will be published in due course.
- Cllr James mentioned concerns raised by local residents concerning the possible closure of the pub.

**1405/28**

The meeting closed at 20.55 p.m.